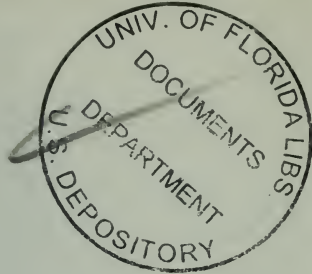


D101.2:F77b

FORT BLISS NATIONAL CEMETERY





FORT BLISS NATIONAL CEMETERY

FORT BLISS, TEXAS 79906

Fort Bliss National Cemetery was established in 1939 and is one of three national cemeteries in the state of Texas under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Army. It is located northeast of and adjacent to the city of El Paso and is the only national cemetery serving western Texas as well as most of the area of Arizona and New Mexico. The other national cemeteries in Texas are the San Antonio National Cemetery and the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, which are located within the metropolitan area of the city of San Antonio. At the present time, Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery and Fort Bliss National Cemetery are the only national cemeteries in Texas which have grave space available for interments.

This national cemetery was established pursuant to an Act of Congress approved 15 June 1936 whereby the Secretary of War was authorized to set aside in the United States Military Reservation of Fort Bliss, Texas, a plot of land, including the existing post cemetery, for use and maintenance as a national cemetery. Appropriation of funds for development of the national cemetery was made in 1939; and by the end of that year, the cemetery area was sufficiently developed to be in a condition to receive interments. The first superintendent of the cemetery, Mr. Elmer E. E. Swanton, a veteran of World War I, reported for duty while the cemetery was still in process of development and was the first superintendent to occupy the cemetery lodge. He served as superintendent at Fort Bliss until June 1940.

The first burial in Fort Bliss National Cemetery was made on 7 March 1940, at which time the remains of Sgt. James Featherstone, QMC, a World War I veteran, were interred. The cemetery was officially dedicated on Sunday, 17 March 1940. Military personnel from the garrison of Fort Bliss and representatives of many veterans organizations participated in the dedication ceremonies. Music for the occasion was furnished by the 7th U. S. Cavalry Band.

Fort Bliss National Cemetery is a part of the Fort Bliss Military Reservation and includes within its boundaries a pre-existing post cemetery established in 1894. This post cemetery, designated at the time of its establishment as the new Fort Bliss Post Cemetery, received remains from an older post cemetery at Fort Bliss, the grounds of which were transferred to the city of El Paso in 1894 for park and other public uses.

Since 1848 an important Army post and military reservation has been in existence in the vicinity of El Paso, Texas. The name Fort Bliss was given to the installation in 1854 honoring Lieutenant Colonel William W. S. Bliss, who died on 5 August 1853. However, more than one hundred years and several wars and conflicts—the Civil War, engagements with hostile Indians, the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, and the conflict in Korea—were to record their impact on the history and life of the nation before a combination of circumstances would bring about an occasion for honoring in distinctive manner the life and deeds of Colonel Bliss.

William Wallace Smith Bliss was born in Whitehall, New York, on 17 August 1815. He entered the United States Military Academy at West Point in September 1829 and graduated 1 July 1833, ranking ninth in a class of forty-three graduates. His first service after graduation was as a second lieutenant in the Infantry in engagements against the Cherokee Indians, 1833-1834. From 1834-1840 this talented and scholarly young man taught mathematics at the United States Military Academy. Additional service in the field against the Indians in Florida during the years 1840 and 1841 was followed by service as adjutant general of the 16th Military Department from 1841-1845. In August 1845 Bliss became Chief of Staff to General Zachary Taylor, serving with him throughout the military occupation of Texas and the Mexican War. He earned the rank of brevet major on 9 May 1846 for gallant and meritorious conduct during the battles at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. Further recognition and the rank of brevet lieutenant colonel came on 23 February 1847 for gallant and meritorious conduct at the battle of Buena Vista. In 1848 Colonel Bliss married Elizabeth Taylor, daughter of General Zachary Taylor. During Taylor's tenure as President of the United States, Colonel Bliss served him well and efficiently as private secretary. After the death of President Taylor on 9 July 1850, Colonel Bliss was assigned as adjutant general of the Western Division of the Army with headquarters at New Orleans. On 5 August 1853, twelve days before his thirty-eighth birthday, Colonel Bliss died at Pascagoula, Mississippi, a victim of yellow fever.

Subsequent to Colonel Bliss' death, his remains were removed to New Orleans from Pascagoula. The records of Christ Episcopal Church, New Orleans, indicate sale of burial space and interment of Lieutenant Colonel W. W. S. Bliss in Tomb 4 of

the Protestant Cemetery (Girod Street) on 28 January 1854. A white marble monument costing about \$10,000 was erected at the site at the direction of the widow. This monument, some twenty feet in overall height, took the form of a broken grecian column surmounted by a laurel wreath, with an eagle and shield at the front base of the column. The base of the column showed the inscription "W.W.S. Bliss" as well as data inscribed on the four sides of the base concerning the military career of the distinguished soldier. Located as it was in a cemetery where most interments were in above-ground vaults, the size and shape of the Bliss monument aroused conjecture as to whether the remains of Colonel Bliss were actually interred in the cemetery. It was not until November 1955 that positive proof was established of the interment of Colonel Bliss' remains beneath the monument.

As far back as 1894 conditions at the Girod Street Cemetery aroused critical comment among admirers of Colonel Bliss; and there was some consideration of possible removal of the Bliss monument and remains, if any, to the then active Chalmette National Cemetery. In 1950 the matter of the removal of the Bliss monument and any remains associated with it again received attention, largely in response to action on the part of personnel of the Army Antiaircraft Artillery and Guided Missile Center at Fort Bliss, who were distressed that the Bliss monument and possibly the remains of the man for whom Fort Bliss was named should continue to be neglected in an almost abandoned cemetery. Finally, in the fall of 1955 the Army was informed that all monuments and remains in the Girod Street Cemetery would have to be removed, as the site of the cemetery had been condemned for use of the city of New Orleans. After securing the necessary consents for disinterment of remains and removal of the monu-

ment, including permission of Mr. William Stauffer, the only known surviving descendant of Colonel Bliss, dismantlement of the Bliss monument was begun in November 1955. There, in the midst of a dense growth of tangled underbrush, broken monuments, and ravaged tombs—a locale which would have been a fitting scene for the macabre tales of Edgar Allen Poe—Army personnel skillfully and carefully dismantled the heavy monument and found beneath it a well-constructed brick and concrete crypt.

The crypt was opened on 10 November 1955 revealing therein a sealed cast iron, form-fitting “mummy” type casket, a type commonly used by wealthy families during the first half of the nineteenth century. The casket was removed to a New Orleans funeral home, and the remains of Colonel Bliss were then transferred to a modern metal casket for shipment to Fort Bliss. On 22 November 1955 full military honors were rendered as the mortal remains of William Wallace Smith Bliss were reinterred in the Fort Bliss National Cemetery—a fitting and deserved tribute to one whose entire career was one of dedication and service to the nation. The grave of Colonel Bliss is located in a triangular plot of ground along the entrance driveway of the cemetery. It is marked by a white marble government headstone.

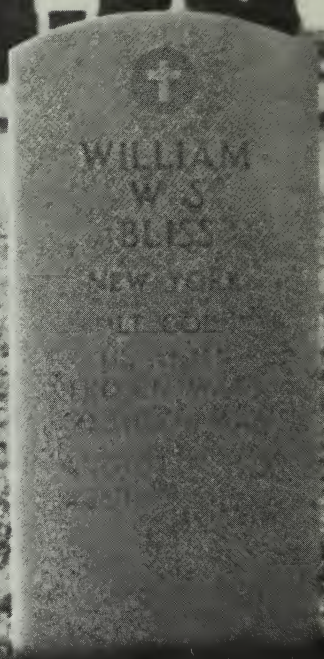
The huge twenty-foot monument initially erected at the grave of Colonel Bliss at the Girod Street Cemetery in New Orleans was brought to Fort Bliss, where it was cleaned and renovated and re-erected in a place of honor near the eastern edge of Howze Stadium. Impressive military ceremonies held on 22 April 1956 marked the rededication of this beautiful monument.

During World War II many air cadets of the Government of China received their training at Fort Bliss. The remains of some

fifty-five Chinese cadets who died during training activities are interred in the Post Section of Fort Bliss National Cemetery.

The Post Section of the Cemetery is also the burial place of twenty-two German, nineteen Italian, and three Austrian World War II prisoners of war. Three Japanese civilian internees are also interred in the post cemetery. These individuals died at prisoner of war and internment camps in Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico during World War II. Provisions of the Geneva Convention of 27 July 1929, of which the United States is a signatory party, provide that deceased prisoners of war be honorably interred and that their graves be marked and properly maintained. In conformance with this international agreement, Army regulations governing post cemeteries and post sections of national cemeteries provide that the remains of prisoners of war and interned aliens may be buried in post cemeteries and post sections of national cemeteries. Each year on 17 November representatives of the Government of West Germany conduct memorial services at Fort Bliss National Cemetery at the graves of the German war dead.

As of 31 December 1968, the area of Fort Bliss National Cemetery comprised 59.85 acres with 42.95 acres developed for burial purposes. As of the same date, a total of 8,222 interments, including 24 unknowns had been made in the cemetery. During the years since its establishment, this national cemetery has become the honored burial place of many from among the various branches of the Armed Forces of the United States. Here ordered ranks of thousands of headstones and monuments offer a mute testimony of service to the nation by those of many races and military rank. For some of the honored dead interred in the old post cemetery, now incorporated in the present national cemetery, conditions of



WILLIAM
W. S.
BLISS
NEW YORK
MAY 1861
OCT 1891

life and the exigencies of military service were not too much different from those experienced by Colonel William W. S. Bliss. For others there was service under other conditions and during another era of the nation's history in the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, in Korea, and in Vietnam.

Fort Bliss National Cemetery is the burial place of Brigadier General William J. Glasgow, a member of the Class of 1891, United States Military Academy. At the time of his death in 1967 at the age of 101 years, he was the oldest graduate of the Military Academy. His remains are interred in Grave 126-A, Section A. Here, too, is the grave of Major General Tom V. Stayton, Class of 1931, United States Military Academy. He served with distinction during World War II and in Korea and as Commanding General at Fort Bliss. At the time of his death on 24 November 1966, General Stayton was Deputy Commanding General

and Chief of Staff of the Army Air Defense Command. His remains are interred in Grave 131, Section A. A white marble government headstone at Grave 9171, Section E, marks the grave of Staff Sergeant Ambrosio Guillen, USMC, killed in action in Korea on 25 July 1953. The nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor, was posthumously awarded Sergeant Guillen for outstanding service above and beyond the call of duty.

Each year on Memorial Day and Veterans Day, Fort Bliss National Cemetery is the scene of special services sponsored by the United American Veterans Organizations of El Paso and the Armed Forces of Fort Bliss to commemorate the services of the many who have served their nation. Throughout the year from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. (to 7:00 P.M. on Memorial Day), the gates of Fort Bliss National Cemetery are open to all who would come to this place of hallowed memories



ADMINISTERED BY:
CHIEF OF SUPPORT SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20315

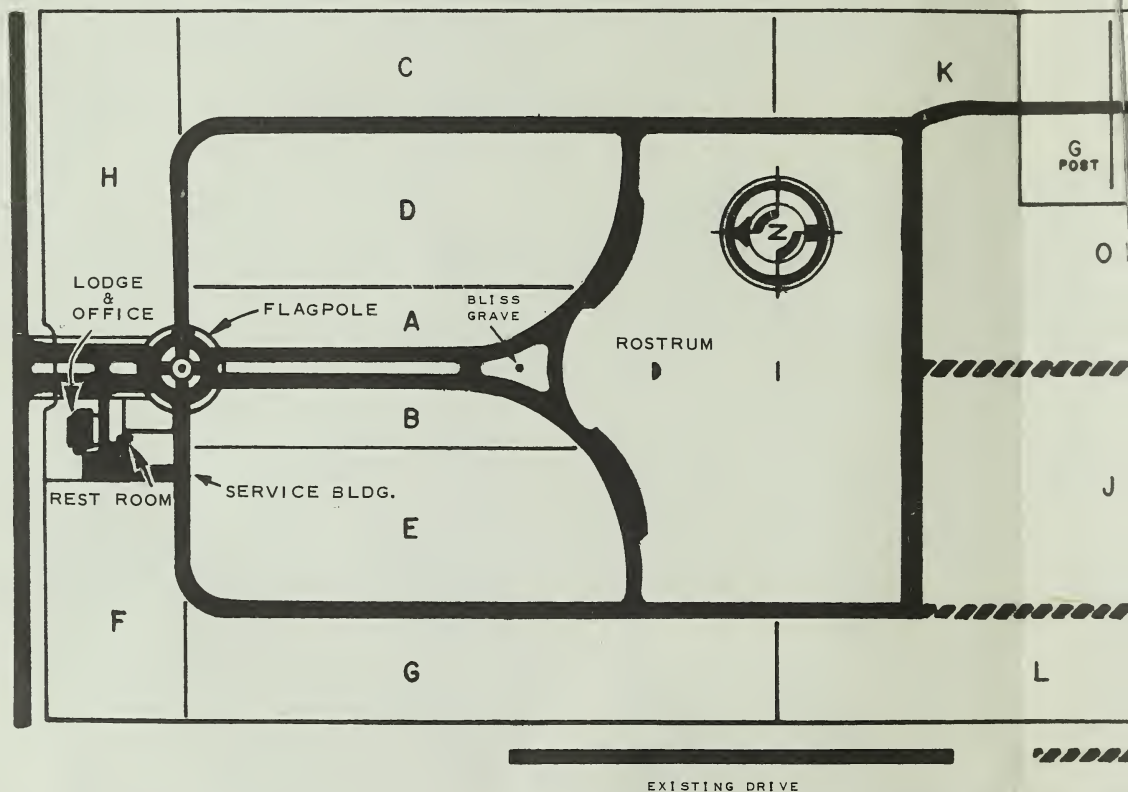
UNDER IMMEDIATE SUPERVISION OF:
CHIEF, NATIONAL CEMETERY
SUPERVISING OFFICE
SHARPE ARMY DEPOT
LATHROP, CALIFORNIA 95330

FLARE



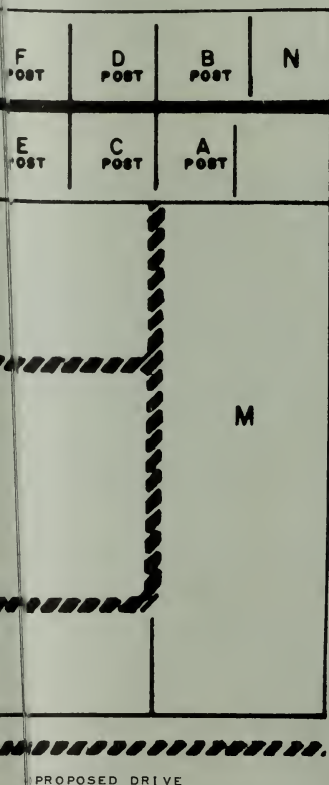
FT. BLISS NAT

FT. BLISS



Name _____ Grave _____

AP OF THE IONAL CEMETERY SS, TEXAS



GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Entrance gates will be open and visitors permitted in the cemetery throughout the year during the following hours:

8:00 AM to 5:00 PM every day

8:00 AM to 7:00 PM Memorial Day

2. Cemetery will not be used as picnic grounds.
3. Visitors will not litter the grounds, cut, break or injure trees, shrubs or plants or otherwise conduct themselves in a manner not in keeping with the dignity and the sacredness of the cemetery.
4. All graves will be decorated on the work day immediately preceding Memorial Day, with small United States flags, which will be removed on the first work day after Memorial Day. Flags are not permitted on graves at any other time.
5. Cut flowers, wreaths or floral emblems either live or artificial, with or without wire stand, may be placed on graves at any time, provided that the wire stand is more than two feet from the headstone and that cut flowers, wreaths or floral emblems do not touch headstone.
6. Information regarding removal of floral items will be furnished by the superintendent.
7. Approximate location of grave is indicated in red pencil.

Section _____

